

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,  
Buildings 63 and 64  
(Double Barracks)  
Des Moines  
Polk County  
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-J

HABS  
IOWA,  
77-DESMO,  
24-J-

## PHOTOGRAPHS

## WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building Nos. 63-64. Double Barracks

This structure stands to the west of the preceding building, along Gruber Street and fronting the south side of the Fort Des Moines parade ground. Built according to the Quartermaster General's Plan 75G, this 200-man facility was finished February 8, 1905, costing \$54,640.45. It had red brick walls joined in running bond by red-pigmented mortar, a rusticated limestone foundation, and a slate roof. The structure consists of a main building with dimensions of 71 feet 8 inches by 39 feet 4 inches. The ends of the main building adjoin the wings, each measuring 39 feet 4 inches by 103 feet 4 inches. Along the front of the main building and the front of the wings there once stood a two-tiered roofed porch supported by turned wood columns. Metal railings connected the columns. At each level on the front of the main building doorways were located close to the adjacent wings. The double doors were paneled and had transoms. At either end of the front of the main building, steps with railings led from the grade to the first level of the porch.

The front of the main building contained six double hung windows, four lights each, per level. Another two-tiered porch originally stood at the rear of the main building. There, too, were located six double hung windows per level. Two doorways were on the upper level, while four were on the lower. A roofed, single-tier porch was attached to the rear of each wing. The outer sides of the wings exhibited nine double hung windows on the upper level and eight on the lower, besides a door leading to the basement. There were five basement windows and two coal chutes at ground level on the outer wall of each wing. On the courtyard side of each wing were ten double hung windows, five at each level, besides five basement windows. All windows in the structure had segmental arches and plain lug limestone sills. The roof of the main building was ridged and had six corbeled chimneys. The gabled roofs of the wings each had a single chimney and two ventilators. On each gable

on the front of the wings were two double hung palladian attic windows with six lights. Windows placed similarly at the rear of each wing had four lights apiece. A firewall divides the double building.

The interior space for each of the barracks was arranged as follows:

Basement:

Cellar, 23' 3" x 36'  
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Hall, 11' 6" x 36'  
Lavatory, 32' 8" x 34' 6"  
Boiler room, 32' 8" x 34' 6"

First floor:

Mess room, 36' 4" x 33' 1"  
Dormitory, 36' 8" x 33' 6"  
Hall and Vestibule, 11' 7" x 36' 2"  
Sergeant's room, 11' 7" x 16' 1"  
Store room, 11' 3" x 8' 4"  
Tailor shop, 11' 3" x 11' 7"  
Company office, 11' 7" x 19' 9"  
NCO room, 11' 3" x 15' 1"  
Cook's room, 11' 7" x 10' 6"  
Pantry, 11' 7" x 10' 7"  
Kitchen, 36' 4" x 21' 1" (+11' 10" x 11' 6")

Second floor:

Dormitory, 100' 4" x 36' 4"  
Hall, 11' 4" x 16' 1"  
Barber shop, 11' 4" x 16' 1"  
NCO room, 11' 4" x 16' 1"  
Day room, 35' 6" x 19' 6"

During and following World War I the double barracks served as Ward Nos. 4 and 3, respectively, when Fort Des Moines was designated a general hospital. The interior walls of Building Nos. 63-64 were plastered and the floors were of wood construction. Girders in the ceilings were supported by steel pipe columns. Equipped with electricity and radiating steam heat, the structure underwent repairs averaging \$260 per year between 1905 and 1922. A number of minor plumbing repairs were made

in the building in 1927, 1928, and 1929, consisting mainly of the replacement of hot water heaters and the installation of flush valves and urinal troughs. In 1930, 1100 square feet of flexatile composition flooring was laid in Building No. 64 at a cost of \$541.40.

In 1987 the structure served as a military entrance processing station for all branches of the service besides the Iowa National Guard. Exterior changes include the removal of all original porches and the repointing of the limestone foundation in front where the porches once stood. Basement windows have been rebuilt; each consists of a 2-light fixed steel sash with 4-light operable hopper and concrete sill. A fire escape has been added on the east side, and on the south side the attic vents have been modified. Two exhaust air outlets were added on the rear (south) of Building No. 63; two more appear on the front (north) of Building No. 64. The roof of the former double barracks is now of asphalt shingles. Inside, the buildings have been extensively refurbished for its present use. Frame partitions with prefinished panelling with wainscoting and drywall have been liberally added, along with flourescent lighting fixtures. On the upper level, marlite wall paneling has been installed. The buildings are in excellent condition. (24)

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24. Card for Building Nos. 63-64. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box 51; Plan, "Two Co. Barrack," No. 75G, April, 1902. 9 sheets. NA, RG 77. Cartographic Archives Division; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.